

Abstract (75 words)

The growing impetus for science-based or evidence-based practices in higher education are shaping conceptions of the nature and role of professional practice and raising new concerns about what it means to be adequately prepared and what it means for practitioners to learn. But the practices of teaching are moral-political, not simply scientific or technical undertakings. This seminar will explore the concept of academic practice wisdom and values and how these might be reclaimed and developed.

Seminar objectives and learning (300 words)

Following participation in this seminar, delegates will be able to

- “ Reflect on the concept of academic practice wisdom and relate this to their own context;
- “ Consider the notion of academic values, how these might be unearthed, debated and made public;
- “ Identify opportunities and challenges in academic development strategies that would engage with the development of practice wisdom;
- “ Explore the ways in which these ideas and concepts translate into their own areas of practice.

This seminar is set within the conference theme of ‘enhancing strategies’, with a particular focus on enhancement that happens outside, or at the boundaries, of formalised academic development; ‘professional learning in-between’. We suggest that much ‘wisdom in practice is based in tacit knowledge grounded in experience’ (Schwandt 2005: 330) and that the challenge for academic developers is to work within these ‘sites of human flourishing’ (ibid), shaping enhancement strategies to engage with this view of professional practice and avoid reducing professional learning to a ‘government-imposed form of “expert professionalism” which is focused on skill and standards’ (McLean 2008: 124). The development of a shared set of values is also integral to the concept of professionalism, yet, academics’ values are often ‘held only tacitly’ (Barnett 2003: 119). It is possible that the ‘technical-rationality’ of the current managerialist environment in higher education across the globe not only constrains the development of an explicit critical value-base (McLean 2008: 17), but also that professional development practices often focus on ‘domestication’ or compliance to institutional need, rather than valuing those that are more emancipatory (Clegg 2003). This seminar will debate the argument that the more emancipatory, richer view of professional practice, values and learning, leads to authentic and sustained change, enabling us to recover notions of practical wisdom, judgement and insight.

References

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- McLean, M. (2008) *Pedagogy and the University*, London: Continuum
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